

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 T-03 AID-20 OMB-01 AEC-11 ACDA-19 MBFR-03

OST-04 GAC-01 IO-12 RSR-01 /179 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0535

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AS

SUBJ: WHITLAM PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 13

1. WHITLAM'S PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 13 CONTAINED POTPOURRI OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SEVERAL UNRELATED SUBJECTS. IF ONE SUBJECT PREDOMINATED, IT WAS AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD FRENCH TESTS AND FRENCH PROPOSAL THAT GOA SEND SOMEONE OF MINISTERIAL RANK TO PARIS FOR CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO TESTS. PM INDICATED HE HIMSELF WOULD NOT GO BUT ONE OF HIS MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES WOULD. WHEN ASKED WHY GOA DID NOT PROTEST AT CHINESE ATMOSPHERIC TESTS, WHITLAM SAID FRENCH WERE MAKING NUISANCE OF THEMSELVES IN CONDUCTING TESTS IN SOUTH PACIFIC AND THAT AS PRACTICAL MATTER, FALLOUT FROM FRENCH TESTS TOOK PLACE OVER AUSTRALIA AND SEVERAL OTHER COUNTRIES IN SAME LATITUDE WHILE CHINESE TESTS CAUSED NO SUCH CONCERN TO AUSTRALIA.

2. IN WHAT WAS REFERRED TO AS QTE WEEKLY QUESTION ON U. S. BASES END QTE BY JOURNALIST, PM WAS ASKED HOW HE WOULD RECONCILE AUSTRALIAN ADHERENCE TO THE NPT AND JOINT MANAGEMENT OF NORTHWEST CAPE WHICH IT WAS IMPLIED HAD SOME KIND OF CONTROL OVER NUCLEAR MATTERS. WHITLAM DID NOT ANSWER DIRECTLY BUT JUST NOTED THAT JOINT

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MANAGEMENT OF NORTHWEST CAPE WILL BE DISCUSSED BY MR. BARNARD WITH U. S. OFFICIALS AND IF GOA POSITION ON MANAGEMENT APPEARED TO BE INCONSISTENT WITH NPT, THIS POINT WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED.

3. WITH REGARD TO REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, WHITLAM REITERATED AUSTRALIAN ADHERENCE TO ANZUS, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS THE QTE LEAST MILITARISTIC END QTE OF ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS WE'VE HAD. HE NOTED THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD NOT WITHDRAW FROM ASPAC BUT REPEATED THE CHARGE THAT ASPAC IS ANACHRONISTIC IN CONTINUING TO INCLUDE REPUBLIC OF CHINA AS MEMBER.

4. WHEN ASKED FOR COMMENT ABOUT HIS IDEAS ON REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION IN LIGHT OF VISIT BY MALAYSIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TUN ISMAIL, WHITLAM CRITICIZED JOURNALISTS WHO REFERRED TO HIS IDEAS AS REFERENCE TO A QTE GROUPING END QTE OR QTE PACT END QTE, WHICH HE SAID HAD PEJORATIVE CONNOTATION. WHITLAM INDICATED TUN ISMAIL HAD SHOWN GENERAL INTEREST IN SUBJECT AS HAD PRESIDENT SUHARTO IN CONTEMPLATING WIDER ARRANGEMENTS FOR REGULAR DISCUSSION AMONG NATIONS OF REGION. (NEWS REPORT WRITTEN BY BOB BAUDINO IN AUSTRALIAN DESCRIBES WHITLAM'S IDEA FOR NEW ORGANIZATION AS BEING SIMILAR TO THAT DEVELOPED IN SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM. WE INFORMED BAUDINO ARTICLE IS BEST PRESENTATION OF GOVERNMENT'S IDEAS WHICH PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE HAS SEEN. COPY OF BAUDINO'S ARTICLE BEING POUCHED.)

5. PM WAS ASKED WHETHER OMEGA HAS DEFENSE SIGNIFICANCE IN CONTEXT OF JOURNALISTS HAVING HAD BEEN TOLD TO CONTACT MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT JONES FOR INFORMATION. JOURNALISTS STATED JONES' OFFICE HAD NO COMMENT TO MAKE AT THIS TIME. WHITLAM ANSWERED THAT THERE WAS NO SUBMISSION TO CABINET AT PRESENT ON OMEGA. HE SAID THAT AS RATIONAL MEN, JOURNALISTS WILL UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE VERY FEW NAVIGATION AIDS THAT DO NOT HAVE DEFENSE SIGNIFICANCE. IN LATER QUESTION, WHITLAM CONFIRMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR OMEGA RESTS WITH DEPT. OF TRANSPORT AND ADDED SOMEWHAT GRATUITOUSLY IF SUBMISSION TO CABINET MADE ON OMEGA, IT WOULD BE MADE BY TRANSPORT MINISTER JONES.

6. WHITLAM WAS ASKED IF HE PUT ANY CREDENCE IN RECENT STATEMENT BY BILL HARTLY OF ALP LEFT WING TO EFFECT THAT AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE DEPT. BEING RUN BY AMERICANS. WHITLAM ANSWERED THAT AMERICANS HAVE NO CONTROL WHATEVER AND STATED HE WAS IN BETTER POSITION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO KNOW ABOUT THIS THAN MR. HARTLEY.

7. WHEN ASKED IF CABINET HAD CONSIDERED PURCHASE OF F-111 AIRCRAFT, WHITLAM SAID THERE HAD BEEN NO TIME FOR THEM TO DO SO BUT THAT IT WAS EXPECTED MATTER WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN CABINET MEETING MORNING MARCH 14. IN FURTHER QUESTION, IT WAS ASKED WHETHER DELIVERY OF FIRST AIRCRAFT SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE IN U. S. ON MARCH 15 WOULD GO AHEAD AS PLANNED. WHITLAM INDICATED DELIVERY WOULD GO AHEAD.
RICE

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